



Efforts to Improve Children's Speaking Skills through the Use of Hand Puppets at TK Bunga Anggrek

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the speaking skills of early childhood children through hand puppets using collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the Kemmis model which was implemented in two cycles. The research subjects consisted of 13 children, namely 9 boys and 4 girls, with the object of research being speaking skills through hand puppets. Data were collected through observations using observation sheets and documentation in the form of activity notes, videos, pictures, and Daily Activity Plans (RKH), then analyzed descriptively qualitatively and quantitatively. The success criteria were determined if the children's speaking skills reached 80% with a very good category. The results of the study showed an increase in speaking skills in Group B children at Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten, where the results of observations in the pre-action stage reached 42.30%, Cycle I 57.69%, and Cycle II increased to 91.03%, thus meeting the success criteria. The steps implemented included the teacher telling stories using hand puppets, dividing children into groups of three children, children repeating the story told by the teacher, and the teacher providing motivation and awards in the form of "Star Signs". This study proves that the use of hand puppet media is effective in improving the speaking skills of early childhood children, while also fostering active participation, courage, and children's confidence in speaking in front of peers, so that this strategy can be used as an interesting and interactive learning model in early childhood education.

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Introduction

The success of national development is determined by quality human resources, and the quality of these resources naturally depends on the quality of education. Many factors are involved in improving the quality of education, such as the role of the government, parents, teachers, and the community. Improving the quality of human resource education should begin in early childhood. Early childhood education is essentially education organized with the aim of facilitating the holistic growth of

children, emphasizing the development of all aspects of a child's personality. Early childhood education involves efforts to stimulate, guide, nurture, and provide learning activities and skills to kindergarten (TK) children. These are the crucial years for a child's development and growth.

Education for early childhood is a systematic effort to stimulate, guide, and provide basic skills through learning activities in Kindergarten (TK). These early years are referred to as the golden age, where the development of children takes place very rapidly and determines the quality of life in the future. Childhood is the right period to develop a child's potential, especially the ability of the brain to develop rapidly. The stimulation given during this period will affect the child's ability to learn, communicate, and interact in the future.

Law No. 20 of 2003, as well as Permendiknas No. 58 of 2012, affirm that kindergarten education is an effort to foster children from birth to the age of six through educational stimuli aimed at supporting physical and spiritual growth, so that children are ready to continue their education to the next level. Early childhood education has an important role in forming the foundation of further development. The Prophet PBUH emphasized the importance of pursuing knowledge, which shows that education is the obligation of every individual and contributes to improving the quality of human beings.

Kindergarten as the first level of formal education for children aged 4-6 years serves to introduce rules, instill discipline, develop communication and socializing skills, and foster positive attitudes and behaviors. In early childhood development, five important aspects must be developed optimally, namely religious and moral values, social-emotional, physical-motor, cognitive, and language. Among these aspects, language has a very important role as a means of communication and expression of children.

Language allows children to convey ideas, feelings, and needs through verbal communication. Language development in early childhood includes the ability to listen, speak, read, and write, where speaking skills are the main focus for expressing ideas and thoughts. Speaking skills play a huge role in children's social interactions. Children who are able to speak well can express opinions, understand others, and adjust to their surroundings. This ability also supports the child's overall social-emotional and cognitive growth.

The family environment has a strategic role in developing children's speaking skills. Parents are the first models that children imitate in learning languages, so daily interactions at home greatly affect children's verbal abilities. In addition to the family, teachers also play an important role in facilitating language development through interesting learning methods and media that suit children's characteristics. The right

learning media can increase children's interest and active participation in the learning process.

One of the effective mediums to improve children's speaking skills is hand puppets. Hand puppets allow children to learn to speak through fun play activities, encouraging children to express ideas, feelings, and thoughts verbally. Through the use of hand puppets, children can interact directly with the media, so that learning activities become more interesting and participatory. This media also helps teachers in stimulating natural speaking skills without putting pressure on children. Based on these problems, this research was conducted with the title "Efforts to Improve Children's Speaking Skills Through the Use of Hand Puppet Media (Classroom Action Research at Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten of TK Bunga Anggrek)", which aims to explore learning strategies to improve early childhood speaking skills optimally through interesting and interactive media.

Methods

The method used in this study is the Classroom Action Research method. In principle, this research is carried out through a cycle that includes planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This method was chosen because the research aims to overcome problems that occur in the classroom, so that it requires cyclical and continuous actions. The selection of this method is based on the analysis of the problem and the research objectives that require field information and direct follow-up. This research emphasizes a reflective, collaborative, and participatory approach, so that every action taken can be evaluated and corrected according to real conditions in the classroom. Thus, this research is focused on the social situation of the classroom, where information collection and follow-up are carried out based on the natural conditions that occur during the learning process.

This research is collaborative, because the researcher collaborates with the classroom teacher in designing, implementing, and evaluating learning. The classroom teacher is responsible for the implementation of actions, while the researcher plays a role in observing and analyzing the learning process that takes place. In a participatory manner, researchers and teachers jointly prepare plans, prepare for implementation, and reflect on the actions that have been carried out. The purpose of this classroom action research is to improve the speaking skills of children aged 5–6 years. The strategy used in this study is the application of hand puppet media as a learning tool, with the hope of stimulating children's active participation and improving the ability to speak in a fun and interactive way.

This research was conducted at TK Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten with 15 children of TK Bunga Anggrek, consisting of 9 boys and 6 girls, as the subjects. The research design used was Classroom Action Research (CAR) developed by Kemmis, also known as

the spiral model. The spiral model was chosen because it emphasizes a cyclical self-reflection process, starting from planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This approach allows researchers to conduct continuous evaluation and improvement based on real conditions that occur during the learning process, so that each action can be optimally tailored to the needs and development of the children.

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) implemented over several cycles, with two cycles. Each cycle consisted of several stages: planning, action, and observation. In the planning stage, based on observations and reflections on the teaching and learning process, problems emerging among students were identified. Based on these problems, steps were then planned to improve and enhance the learning process. The planning stages included meetings between the researcher and observer to determine the research strategy, develop learning scenarios aligned with the curriculum and students' initial abilities, and prepare Daily Activity Units (SKH) aligned with the learning objectives. Furthermore, the researcher planned core learning activities, designed Student Worksheets (LKS), prepared learning tools and media, determined the methods to be used, and developed a format for observation and assessment of learning outcomes.

In the action stage, the researcher implemented the teaching and learning process according to the prepared scenarios, using the established materials and methods. This activity also involved collaborators as observers, who were the researcher's colleagues, to directly observe the learning process. The observation phase is conducted using an observation sheet that assesses student activity, enthusiasm for learning, courage to ask and answer questions, perseverance, and cooperation in completing assignments. This observation aims to identify, record, and document every indicator of the learning process and outcomes, both those arising from planned actions and those that arise during the activity.

The observation phase is conducted to determine the extent to which the implementation of the actions aligns with the previously developed plan and to assess whether the ongoing actions are producing the desired changes, namely improved student learning outcomes. These observations are conducted systematically using observation sheets that cover various indicators, allowing researchers to monitor student engagement, enthusiasm for learning, courage to ask and answer questions, persistence, and cooperation in participating in learning activities.

Following the observation phase, the reflection phase involves analyzing and evaluating the observation data. The researcher and the team engage in discussions and Q&A sessions to review the teaching and learning process that has been implemented, with the goal of improving and refining learning activities for the next cycle. The reflection process also serves as verification of the team's observation data, ensuring

consistency and accuracy between the researcher's observations and those of the observer team. From this verification, researchers can identify which indicators have emerged and which have not been fully achieved during the first cycle of learning. The results of this reflection are then used as a basis for planning new actions and making improvements in the next cycle, so that students' learning skills can be optimally improved.

The data in this study were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, which were sourced from children's learning achievements in speaking skills activities at Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten using hand puppets. Observations were conducted to monitor teachers and children during the learning process. Researchers conducted direct observations simultaneously with the ongoing activities, namely the use of hand puppets as a strategy to improve speaking skills. Observations were recorded using an observation sheet filled with checkmarks for each behavioral and skill indicator that emerged.

Furthermore, this study also utilized interviews as a tool for gathering information. Interviews were conducted by asking questions verbally and answering them verbally. Unstructured interviews were used in this study, allowing researchers to gather information more flexibly according to evolving situations and the responses of the participants. According to Sugiyono, unstructured interviews are effective when researchers want to obtain in-depth and contextual data from research subjects, thus enabling them to understand the experiences, opinions, and perceptions of teachers and children during the learning process. Documentation was also used as a supplementary data source, in the form of activity notes, photographs, and videos to support the verification of the observation and interview results. The combination of these three data collection techniques aims to obtain a complete, accurate, and valid picture of the process and results of children's speaking skills learning through hand puppet media.

In this study, interviews were conducted using guidelines in the form of an outline of the issues to be explored from the research subjects. Interviews were aimed at parties involved in improving speaking skills, with the goal of obtaining in-depth information regarding the teaching and learning process. According to Sugiyono, a research instrument is a tool used to measure observed natural or social phenomena, specifically, these phenomena are called research variables. The instruments used in this study included observation sheets in the form of checklists and interview guidelines. Interviews were conducted in a structured manner, with written questions prepared to ensure more systematic and relevant data collection. Furthermore, documentation was also used as a data source. Documentation in this study included various written and visual materials that could be used to gather information. Specifically, the documentation used included activity notes during the learning process, videos,

drawings or photographs, and written evidence in the form of a Daily Activity Plan (RKH). This documentation helped researchers verify and supplement the data obtained through observations and interviews.

Data analysis was conducted by systematically organizing the results of observations, field notes, and documentation data to ensure they were easily understood and shared with others. The purpose of the analysis in this classroom action research is to determine whether improvements, enhancements, or changes have occurred as expected, not to generalize or test theories. The analysis in this study combines quantitative and qualitative data, with quantitative data analyzed through percentage calculations, while qualitative data, in the form of field observations, are analyzed descriptively. To ensure data validity, this study employed three techniques derived from the ten methods developed by Moleong: observational persistence, triangulation, and peer review. Observational persistence was achieved through careful, detailed, and continuous observation throughout the study, including intensive interviews and active involvement in learning activities, thus minimizing the possibility of subject bias.

Triangulation was conducted to compare data with other sources for comparison or verification. This included comparing data from observations, interviews, and documents; comparing data collection methods; involving other observers to check the degree of trustworthiness; and using theory as a tool to comprehensively explain the data. Peer review was conducted by discussing the research process and results with the supervisor, fellow students, or experienced researchers, with the aim of obtaining input on both methodology and the research context. In addition, discussions were also held with observers involved in data collection to formulate further actions, so that the research could proceed collaboratively and the results more valid.

Result

Before conducting the classroom action research, the researcher first collected scores on speaking skills using hand puppets using observation techniques. This pre-action aimed to determine children's initial speaking abilities using hand puppets before the learning activity. The pre-action was conducted by the teacher as the learning implementer on Wednesday, August 21, 2019, and involved three data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. The documentation used included observation checklists, activity notes during the learning process, videos, pictures or photographs, and written evidence in the form of a Daily Activity Plan (RKH) and interview forms.

The pre-action included playing with hand puppets, followed by naming the puppets provided by the teacher. During the activity, the observation checklist was used to assess children's ability to convey intentions, ideas, thoughts, concepts, and feelings

to others, as well as their ability to construct simple sentences using complete spoken language. Observations during the pre-action stage indicated that children's speaking skills using hand puppets in the Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten Group still needed improvement. Therefore, efforts were planned to improve speaking skills through the systematic use of hand puppets. Hand puppet playing activities are packaged by dividing the group, where each group is always supervised and accompanied by a teacher so that children can participate actively and their speaking skills can develop optimally.

Based on the results of the pre-action that has been carried out using an observation sheet in the form of a checklist, the speaking skills of Group B1 children through the medium of hand puppets are still relatively low. The indicator of conveying intentions, including the child's ideas, thoughts, ideas, and feelings, only reached 41.0%, while the indicator of making simple sentences reached 43.6%. Overall, the average speaking skill before action only reached 42.31%, which was included in the poor criteria. This condition is the basis for researchers to carry out learning actions with the aim of improving children's speaking skills through the medium of hand puppets. Based on the results of observation and evaluation, the researcher and collaborator, namely TK Bunga Anggrek, designed learning actions to be implemented in Cycle I. The agreed action to improve speaking skills is the use of hand puppet media as a means of learning, where children can get to know various kinds of animals and the sounds produced by these animals.

In the play activity using hand puppet media, the children first listen to the teacher tell a story. After the story is finished, the teacher asks the children again about the content of the story through a question and answer session. Then, the children were asked to play hand puppets in pairs according to the storyline that had been made. This activity is designed to train children's speaking skills to be able to apply these abilities in daily life. The implementation of Cycle I began with the planning stage which was carried out on Monday, August 26, 2023. In this stage, the researcher and the classroom teacher first coordinate the learning activities to be carried out, including determining the theme and subtheme of learning. The theme chosen is "Universe" with the subtheme "Objects of the Universe".

Furthermore, learning indicators are formulated in the Daily Activity Plan (RKH) which refers to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 58 of 2006. The focus of the indicators developed in RKH is the language aspect, because the purpose of this study is to improve children's speaking skills through the medium of hand puppets. To support learning activities, equipment in the form of hand puppets made of flannel fabric is needed, adjusted to the desired size and shape.

Cycle I was held in three meetings. The first meeting was held on Monday, August 26, 2023, with the initial activity in the form of a flag ceremony, because the day was

Monday. The children then perform the sunnah dhuha prayer together in the mosque before entering the classroom. In class, the teacher greets, attends, and asks how the children are doing. The initial learning activity continued with an appreciation of the various objects in the universe. The teacher asks the children about the objects they know, although not all children can answer correctly. The core activity at the first meeting involved the use of hand puppet media. The teacher explained the rules of the activity, introduced hand puppets in the form of rabbits and monkeys, and told the story of "The Rabbit and the Monkey".

Children are asked to listen carefully to the story. After the story is finished, the teacher conducts a question and answer session according to the storyline. The questions asked included the identification of the animal characters in the story, the location of their residence, the motives of the animals' actions, the feelings of the story characters, and the wisdom of the story. Children are given praise and rewards in the form of stickers to encourage active participation. The final activity of the first meeting included an evaluation with questions and answers, an explanation of healthy nail hygiene, and a reflection session to discuss the activities that had been carried out. During this meeting, the children still show shyness when speaking in front of the class so that their ability to convey ideas and make simple sentences is not optimal.

The second meeting of Cycle I took place on Tuesday, August 27, 2023, with the same theme and subtheme. The initial activity was carried out by singing, questions and answers about the theme, and familiarity with the rules for using school uniforms. The children were then asked to crawl under the table in turn before sitting down to listen to the teacher's instructions. Appreciation is again given regarding the various objects of the universe. The core activity at the second meeting used the previously introduced hand puppet media, namely frogs and sea turtles. The teacher told the story of "The Proud Frog and the Wise Sea Turtle" before the children were asked to retell the story in turn. Some children, such as Ahmad Ikhsan Sanusi, Faiz Asyami Hasyim, and Alif Ramadhan Rosyid, are able to convey ideas and ideas, even though they are still shy and need the guidance of teachers. Children who have not dared to progress are guided individually by teachers and researchers.

The final activities of the second meeting included questions and answers about the child's experiences and activities that day, evaluation of learning outcomes, and giving advice on behavior towards parents. The session ended with singing, applause, prayers, and greetings. The observation results showed an improvement in children's speaking skills, although some still needed further guidance. The third meeting of Cycle I was held on Wednesday, August 28, 2023, with the same theme and subtheme. Initial activities include singing, questions and answers, and an introduction to class rules. Children do a game of bouncing balls while walking before starting the core activity.

In the core stage, the children are divided into groups of two. The teacher recounts the story of "The Proud Butterfly and Parrot," and the children are asked to tell the story in pairs in front of the class. Some children, such as Advizahra Salsabila and Aqilla Mutiara Pradipta, are able to tell stories in front of their friends, even though the simple sentence composition is still mixed with Javanese and is not entirely accurate. Teachers guide children in the correct use of language, but still provide rewards as motivation.

At the end of the third meeting, the teacher explained the value of tolerance towards other religions, followed by the evaluation of the activity through discussion and question and answer, as well as providing advice on behavior towards parents. The session ended with singing, applause, prayers, and greetings. The results of the observation showed an improvement in children's speaking skills from the previous meeting. Children begin to dare to speak in front of the class without excessive embarrassment, although they still need guidance to form complete sentences. Observation during Cycle I was carried out at the same time as the action using hand puppet media. The researcher used a checklist instrument sheet to assess children's speaking skills, including indicators of conveying meaning clearly and fluently and making simple sentences in complete spoken language.

The results of observations show that most children still have difficulty conveying ideas, ideas, and feelings clearly. Children tend to be shy because they are not used to speaking in front of the class, so their confidence is still low. The average speaking skill in Cycle I for the indicator of conveying intent reached 65.80%, while the indicator made simple sentences reached 55.55%. Some children are still reluctant to listen to the teacher's instructions and tend to chat with friends, so the learning atmosphere becomes less conducive.

The results of this evaluation show that the use of hand puppet media has a positive influence on children's speaking skills, although the process of improving skills requires continuous guidance, repetition, and motivation at TK Bunga Anggrek. Hand puppet media helps children understand the content of the story, identify characters, convey ideas, and interact with classmates creatively. With teacher-accompanied group divisions, children can practice their speaking skills actively, although there are still challenges in the form of embarrassment and awkwardness when speaking in front of classmates. Overall, the implementation of Cycle I emphasizes collaboration between researchers and teachers, active involvement of children in the learning process, and the application of hand puppet media as the main strategy.

Observation, questions and answers, and final evaluations of the activity provide a clear picture of the child's speaking skills before the next action. Cycle I is the basis for improving and developing learning strategies in the next cycle, with the main goal of improving children's ability to convey ideas, ideas, and feelings, as well as form complete

simple sentences. This approach also emphasizes a fun, interactive, and play-based learning experience, so that children not only learn cognitively but also develop social and emotional abilities through interaction with classmates and teachers.

Discussion

Based on research conducted at Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten, the use of hand puppets has proven effective in improving children's speaking skills. During the pre-action phase, researchers collected initial data through observation, interviews, and documentation, including observation sheets, activity notes, videos, photos, and Daily Activity Plans (RKH). Observations indicated that children's ability to convey intentions, ideas, concepts, and feelings was still low, with the indicator for conveying intentions reaching 41.0% and the indicator for creating simple sentences reaching 43.6%. The average child's speaking skills reached only 42.31%, which is considered poor. This situation served as the basis for researchers and teachers at Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten to design systematic learning activities using hand puppets.

Cycle I was implemented through three meetings with the theme "The Universe" and the subtheme "Universe Objects." Each meeting began with initial activities such as a flag ceremony, the sunnah Dhuha prayer, greetings, taking attendance, and asking questions about the children's condition that day. The core activities focused on using hand puppets as a learning medium for storytelling. The teacher tells stories such as "The Rabbit and the Monkey," "The Arrogant Frog and the Wise Sea Turtle," and "The Butterfly and the Arrogant Parrot." The children are then asked to retell the stories individually or in pairs, following the storyline. This method aims to allow children to practice their speaking skills directly through fun activities.

Observations from the first meeting showed that the children were still shy when speaking in front of the class, resulting in their ability to convey ideas and construct simple sentences that were not optimal. Providing rewards in the form of star stickers successfully motivated the children to be more active, although some still needed direct guidance from the teacher. The second meeting showed improvement, with some children beginning to express their ideas and thoughts, although they remained awkward and needed guidance from the teacher to construct appropriate sentences. This approach emphasizes the importance of guidance, repetition, and motivation so that children can express themselves more confidently.

In the third meeting, the children began to feel confident in telling stories in front of their peers in pairs. Although some sentences still mixed with regional languages, such as Javanese, the teacher continued to guide them and provide rewards for motivation. Observations showed an improvement in the children's speaking skills compared to the previous meeting, particularly in conveying intentions, ideas, thoughts,

and feelings. Children are becoming accustomed to speaking in front of the class, although they still need guidance to form complete, simple sentences.

In addition to developing speaking skills, hand puppets also help children understand story content, recognize characters, improve social interaction, and foster creativity in the classroom. By grouping children under the guidance of teachers, each child has the opportunity to practice speaking actively and develop social-emotional skills through interactions with their peers. This play-based learning approach provides a fun, interactive learning experience and motivates children to be more active in the learning process. Overall, research results at Bunga Anggrek Kindergarten indicate that hand puppets are effective in improving children's speaking skills. Children are able to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings with more confidence and are beginning to form more complete, simple sentences. Although challenges such as shyness and self-doubt persist, hand puppets provide a fun, interactive learning experience that simultaneously develops children's cognitive, social, and emotional skills. This strategy is an appropriate approach for language learning at the early childhood education level and serves as a basis for developing learning strategies in subsequent cycles.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the use of hand puppet media can significantly improve students' speaking skills through systematic learning steps, namely the teacher tells stories using hand puppets, groups children in groups of three, asks children to repeat the story that has been told by the teacher, and provides motivation and rewards in the form of "Stars"; the implementation of this strategy has proven effective because the average child's speaking skills increased from 42.30% in the Pre-action stage, to 57.69% in Cycle I, and reached 91.03% in Cycle II, thus exceeding the research success criteria of 80%.

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